

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
PA-02 ICA-20 SP-02 /046 W
-----130410 021530Z /75

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
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INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF SECTION 2 NEW DELHI 6940

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, IN, US
SUBJECT: INDO-US NUCLEAR RELATIONS: PRESS REPORTS

1. ON MAY 2 THE "TIMES OF INDIA" PRINTED AN EDITORIAL BY L.K. SHARMA ASSERTING THAT INDIA COULD AVOID KNUCKLING UNDER TO US PRESSURE ON NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS BY OBTAINING ENRICHED URANIUM ON THE US BLACK MARKET, WHERE THE GOING RATE IS APPROXIMATELY DOLS3 MILLION PER KILOGRAM. REFERRING TO THE ALLEGED THEFT OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS BY ISRAELIS IN THE MID-1960S AND OTHER ALLEGATIONS OF "LOST" MATERIAL, HE ATTACKS US NUCLEAR ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS AS INEXCUSABLY LAX, CONCLUDING THAT THE US ITSELF DOES NOT HAVE ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS. SHARMA SUGGESTS THAT "THE US SHOULD FIRST PUT ITS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER INSTEAD OF DENYING A FEW TONS OF FUEL TO A COUNTRY WHICH IS COMMITTED TO PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY."

2. REFERRING TO A "WASHINGTON POST" REPORT, "TIMES OF INDIA" WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT M.V. KAMATH INFORMED HIS READERS MAY 2 THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ASKED CONGRESS FOR FUNDS TO DEVELOP A "REDUCED RESIDUAL RADIATION" (RRR) BOMB, WHOSE EFFECTS ARE THE OPPOSITE
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OF THE NEUTRON BOMB, AS WELL AS OTHER NEW NUCLEAR WEAPONS. KAMATH BELIEVES THAT "INSTEAD OF DEFUSING EXISTING STOCKPILES OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AS MR. DESAI HAS ASKED, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS APPARENTLY GOING AHEAD WITH THE CREATION AND TESTING OF NEW AND NO LESS DEADLY ONES." HE REACHES THE USUAL CONCLUSION THAT "WITH THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION SEEKING TO

ENLARGE ITS NUCLEAR WEAPONRY ON A SCALE HITHERTO SUSPECTED BUT NOT MADE PUBLIC, THE PRESIDENT'S CONCERN TO KEEP INDIA NON-NUCLEAR ASSUMES QUESTIONABLE PROPORTIONS."

3. T.V. PARASURAM, WRITING THE SAME DAY IN THE "INDIAN EXPRESS", EXPRESSES UNHAPPINESS AT THE US ATTITUDE TOWARD INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS. LOOKING AT THE WAY THE US "TRIED TO WRIGGLE OUT OF FREELY NEGOTIATED COMMITMENTS BY INTRODUCING AMENDMENTS UNILATERALLY" DURING THE SENATE DEBATE ON THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES, HE EXPRESSES DOUBT ABOUT THE RELIABILITY OF THE US AGREEMENT TO SUPPLY FUEL FOR TARAPUR, SINCE "THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION HAS ALREADY BROKEN THE AGREEMENT." HE IS CONFIDENT THAT INDIA COULD MAKE TARAPUR WORK WITH AN INDIGENOUSLY-DEVELOPED FUEL AND SUGGESTS THAT SINCE INDIA, TOO, IS INTERESTED IN NON-PROLIFERATION, THE US "MAY FIND IT WISER TO SEEK A COOPERATIVE APPROACH WITH INDIA INSTEAD OF BRANDISHING OVER ITS HEAD THE DAMOCLES' SWORD" OF A TARAPUR FUEL CUTOFF. AND SINCE THE US CONGRESS HAS "ARTIFICALLY CREATED THE 'PROBLEMS' OVER TARAPUR, UNDOUBTEDLY WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATION," IT IS UP TO CONGRESS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS BY CHANGING US LAW TO FIT EXISTING INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS.

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4. IN THE MAY 1 "HINDU", WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT EASWAR SAGAR REPORTS THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S QUICK DECISION TO APPROVE A SHIPMENT OF NUCLEAR FUEL TO INDIA IS SEEN IN WASHINGTON AS AN INDEX OF HIS DESIRE TO REDEEM THE PLEDGE HE MADE IN INDIA LAST JANUARY AND ALSO OF HIS IMPATIENCE WITH THE NRC REFUSAL TO ISSUE THE NECESSARY EXPORT LICENSE. SAGAR MENTIONS REPORTS THAT THE PRESIDENT MIGHT TRY TO PERSUADE CONGRESS TO ADOPT A "POSITIVE RESOLUTION" SUPPORTING THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION SO THAT THE SHIPMENT MIGHT BE MADE WITHIN 60 DAYS. THE PRESIDENT IS SAID TO BE ANXIOUS TO HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS ON THE SHIPMENT BY THE TIME PM DESAI COMES TO TOWN. SAGAR ALSO REPORTS THAT OFFICIALS IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF THE USG ARE OF THE VIEW THAT UNLESS INDIA MOVES TOWARD ACCEPTING SAFEGUARDS, THE 7.6 TON SHIPMENT TO TARAPUR WILL BE THE LAST. SAGAR ELABORATES ON THIS VIEW DRAWING ON AN INTERVIEW WITH NRC COMMISSIONER GILINSKY, WHO VOTED "NO" ON THE TARAPUR SHIPMENT. GILINSKY TOLD SAGAR THAT THE US NEEDS ASSURANCES NOW THAT TARAPUR'S SPENT FUEL WILL REMAIN UNDER SAFEGUARDS, SINCE ARTICLE 6-A OF THE TARAPUR SUPPLY AGREEMENT, PERMITS INDIA TO WITHDRAW

SAFEGUARDS FROM TARAPUR ONCE THE PLANT CEASES TO USE
US-SUPPLIED FUEL.

5. IN PART 3 OF A 3-PART SERIES IN THE "INDIAN EXPRESS"
ENTITLED "INDIA'S NUCLEAR DILEMMA" (SERIES POUCHED TO
NEA/INS), A.G. NOORANI CITES ARTICLE 27 OF THE VIENNA
CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF TREATIES IN ATTACKING THE
"ILLIGALITY" OF US ATTEMPTS TO RENEGOTIATE ITS NUCLEAR
SUPPLY AGREEMENTS. NOTING THAT ARTICLE 60 OF THE SAME
CONVENTION GIVES A PARTY TO A TREATY THE RIGHT TO
TERMINATE THE AGREEMENT IN THE FACE OF A MATERIAL
BREACH BY ANOTHER PARTY, HE WRITES THAT "IT WOULD BE A
TRAGIC MISTAKE IF INDIA AGREES TO RENEGOTIATE ANY OF

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ACTION NEA-11

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PA-02 ICA-20 SP-02 /046 W
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R 021241Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
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THE AGREEMENTS OR ACCEPT ANY OF THE PALLIATIVES WHICH
THE US MIGHT OFFER SUCH AS 'JOINT DETERMINATION' OF
THE TARAPUR REPROCESSING PLANT IN RETURN FOR INDIA'S
ACCEPTANCE OF FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS." HE NOTES
THAT UNDER THE INDO-US AGREEMENTS INDIA IS ENTITLED TO:
--USE THE REPROCESSING PLANT AT TARAPUR TO REPROCESS
SPENT FUEL FROM OTHER REACTORS;

-- A 'JOINT DETERMINATION' OF THIS PLANT TO REPROCESS
ACCUMULATED SPENT FUEL FROM THE TARAPUR REACTORS; AND
--AN UNHINDERED SUPPLY OF ENRICHED URANIUM.
ACCEPTING RESTRICTIONS ON REPROCESSING, NOORANI BELIEVES,
WOULD "UNDERMINE" INDIA'S BREEDER REACTOR PROGRAM AND,
CONSEQUENTLY, INDIA'S EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE NUCLEAR
SELF-SUFFICIENCY. THIS WOULD, IN TURN, HAVE A PROFOUND
NEGATIVE IMPACT ON INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE.

6. NOORANI ARGUES THAT CANADA'S UNILATERAL ABROGATION OF THE INDO-CANADIAN AGREEMENTS REGARDING RAPP-II RELEASED INDIA FROM APPLYING IAEA SAFEGUARDS TO THAT FACILITY. HE URGES THAT SOVIET HEAVY WATER NOT BE INTRODUCED INTO RAPP-II AND THAT THE 1977 INDO-IAEA SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT - A CONDITION IMPOSED BY THE UNCLASSIFIED

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SOVIETS FOR SUPPLYING HEAVY WATER - BE ALLOWED TO LAPSE. THIS, HE CONTENDS, WOULD LEAVE RAPP COMPLETELY FREE OF SAFEGUARDS. A US BREACH OF THE TARAPUR SUPPLY AGREEMENT, NOORANI WRITES, WOULD RELEASE INDIA FROM APPLYING IAEA SAFEGUARDS TO THAT FACILITY. HE CONCLUDES: "THERE IS NOT ONE INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT SIGNED BY INDIA WHEREBY IT GAVE UP THE RIGHT TO REPROCESS; AND ONLY ONE, THE 1977 ACCORD WITH THE IAEA, RESTRICTS ITS RIGHT TO CONDUCT NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS. NOW ALL THESE RESTRICTIONS MUST GO."
GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

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